



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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North Carolina Man Sentenced to Jail in Revenge Porn Case

A North Carolina man has pleaded guilty to telephone misuse and the distribution of sexually explicit photos of his former girlfriend in what is believed to be among the first “revenge porn” prosecutions in Maryland since the law went into effect in 2014. Sam A. Gethers, 57, of Greensboro, pleaded guilty in Howard County Circuit Court on Monday and was sentenced to one year in jail. Maryland is among a group of states where it is a crime to post certain images on the Internet, without consent, for the purpose of causing serious emotional distress.

According to police and prosecutors, an Elkridge woman reported that she and Gethers had been dating for two years when she broke up with him in January 2015 and moved from South Carolina to Howard County. Since the break-up, Gethers constantly called her, texted her and messaged her on Facebook to rekindle the relationship. During Monday’s plea hearing, Assistant State’s Attorney Amy Hott told the court that Gether’s harassing e-mails, text messages and phone calls escalated when the woman rebuffed him. Hott stated that when the woman confronted Gethers in one phone call and threatened to call the police, Gethers responded with threats to find her and kill her, and that he would send their private, explicit photos to her family, friends and co-workers—all of which, said Hott, was to extract “the maximum amount of emotional damage.”

The prosecutor then detailed a list of photographs sent to the woman’s employer, co-workers, friends and family after he hacked contacts on her iCloud account. The woman gave a tearful victim impact statement. Prior to sentencing, Assistant State’s Attorney Stephen Yaeger stated that Gethers possessed “an overall pattern of abusive behavior to the women in his life” and that he was currently imprisoned in North Carolina for a violent assault on a new girlfriend. Gethers declined to address the court.

At sentencing, Judge William V. Tucker stated, “This situation disturbs the court. Your anger at her was clearly meant to humiliate, embarrass and demean her.” He sentenced Gethers to a fully-suspended three-year sentence on the telephone misuse charge, and two years, suspending all but one on the revenge porn charge. The sentence is consecutive to the Gether’s North Carolina sentence. The judge fined Gethers \$500 and ordered him to pay court costs. Upon his eventual release, Gethers must serve three years of supervised probation, complete a domestic violence counseling program and to have no contact with the victim.

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